

**House Health Policy Committee
September 5, 2006**

**Janet Hash
Manager, Staffing & Recruitment
Human Resources Department
Detroit Medical Center**

Good morning, my name is Janet Hash, and I am Manager, Staffing & Recruitment for the Detroit Medical Center. I would like to thank you, Chairman Gaffney, and other members of the House Health Policy Committee for giving me an opportunity to comment on HB 6253 which extends the sunset provisions in Sections 16181(2) and 16186(1) of the Public Health Code. These provisions were designed to facilitate the licensure process for health care professionals who are licensed, registered, or certified by a province of Canada which maintains standards substantially equivalent to Michigan. This law has been extremely helpful in addressing the severe shortages in certain categories of health professionals in Michigan, especially for registered nurses. However, these provisions will expire on January 1, 2007 unless a bill is passed to extend them.

Hospitals throughout Michigan – and especially in southeast Michigan – continue to experience severe shortages of nurses and other health personnel. As you are aware, this shortage is a part of the larger major national nursing shortage. In addition, we experience shortages in various allied health job groups including physical and occupational therapy, pharmacy, laboratory technologists and radiology and special imaging technologists. These provisions have helped to streamline the licensure process for health professionals licensed in Canada who may seek licensure in Michigan, thereby facilitating our efforts to recruit and hire qualified Canadian professionals.

Our Canadian employees represent approximately 12% (over 550 employees) of our total Nursing and allied health licensed professional population. This group of employees is invaluable to the DMC, allowing us to meet the healthcare needs of the populations that we serve and to make a positive contribution to the health and well-being of our community. This group of employees has invested

significant time with our institution with average service time of over 8 years for Nursing and over 4 years for allied health.

We know that this Nursing and allied health staffing challenge will not change any time in the near future, as the 7 year hiring need projections show a range of 64-74% hiring need for the Nursing and allied health positions, with Nursing at 74%. Specifically, this means that over the next 7 years we will need to replace 74% of our current nursing workforce.

The dedication and expertise of the Canadian Nursing and allied health professionals is an important resource that we need to tap during this critical shortage. A closer look at one of our Canadian Nursing employees is the best way to summarize our reasons for supporting the extension of the sunset provisions. Allow me to briefly introduce Brenda Hillock. Brenda has worked for the Detroit Medical Center since 1990, at both Sinai-Grace Hospital and Children's Hospital of Michigan. She received her nursing diploma from Saint Clair College in 1981, and is celebrating her 25th anniversary as an RN. Brenda has been a member of the transport team for Children's Hospital of Michigan since 2000, and has obtained her certification as a trauma nurse. She is a leader and educator on her unit and in the hospital. Her skills and dedication so impressed a fellow employee that that employee nominated her for the Nurse of the Month and subsequently she was selected as the Children's Hospital of Michigan Nurse of the Year. Brenda Hillock... one of the many dedicated DMC employees who are Canadian citizens... dedicated to the care of our patients and the health of our community.

Now my colleague will describe the proactive ways that the DMC, and other regional healthcare systems, are taking steps to find long-term solutions to these workforce shortages.

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**Camille McFadden
Nurse Recruiter for Children's Hospital of Michigan
Detroit Medical Center.**

Good morning. My name is Camille McFadden, and I am the Nurse Recruiter for Children's Hospital of Michigan from the Detroit Medical Center. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you regarding my support of extending these sunset provisions.

According to a survey conducted by the Michigan Center for Nursing, colleges and universities offering nursing programs are unable to fill to their capacity due to the shortage of qualified nursing faculty available to teach. There are currently not enough masters prepared nurses pursuing a career track in education to meet the projected growth and education needs of the nursing profession over the next eight years. We have qualified nursing school candidates on waiting lists to enter a nursing program because we do not have the human resources available to facilitate their training.

One of the factors that greatly influences this shortage of faculty is the inability of the colleges and universities to remain competitive with the salaries offered to masters prepared nurses in the direct patient care arena. Collective efforts to develop potential solutions to this crisis for our profession are being addressed at both the state level, and locally within the greater Detroit area.

Currently, the DMC and five other Detroit area health systems are working with state officials, colleges, and universities to address the nurse and allied health professional shortage. Initiatives under development include increasing the availability of fast track education certificate programs for masters-level nursing students, sharing of faculty resources between nursing programs, and potential development of dual appointments of educators through partnerships between the colleges and universities and the health systems. While these initiatives are in the planning phase at this time, they cannot be put in place quickly enough to meet the current demand necessary to ensure the provision of safe quality care to our patients.

At the Detroit Medical Center, we historically have had, and currently continue to have, very positive experiences with Canadian-trained health professionals. Through the use of our Canadian healthcare worker resources available to us, we have been able to stabilize our system vacancy rate at 7.6% despite an increase in the national shortage of nurses.

We are asking you to support the proposed 5-year extension contained in HB 6253, thus allowing us and other health care providers to continue to meet our short-term need for nursing resources. We remain committed to working with the legislature, professional health organizations, and others to seek long-term solutions to meet the health care professional needs of our citizens in the state of Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration and support.